

“A Look into the Epistle of Colossians 1”

By Brother Parrish Lee

Sunday, August 7th, 2016

You may be seated, Saints. Thank you for the warm welcome, Brother Malcolm. I don't know about, “why they came,” but, thank you for the warm welcome. It's going to be something else. My voice cracks a lot. I've gotten past that age where I could hold a tune for a sustained block and period of time; I've gotten past that point. Age crept in and things don't connect like they used to. But, when the sky is rolled back like a scroll, and every eye shall see Him, as He comes and gathers His elect from the ends of the Earth, the Bible says. On *that day*, on *that day*, my voice won't be cracked. On that day, every Saint who is wrapped up in the grace of God will sing that new, Heavenly song, “Redeemed, redeemed, my soul has been redeemed,” as we are received up into glory. I look so forward to that day. Amen, amen.

Giving honor to God, who is the head of our lives. Giving honor to the One Who makes *all* things possible. Giving honor to the One who woke us up this morning, whether we thanked Him or not. Giving honor to the One who made sure, if we wanted to, we could have something to eat today. Giving honor to the One who made sure that we have air to breathe today. Giving honor to that God. Giving honor to those who have gone before us in this ministry. Those in the Word, from all the prophets and all the elders, all the disciples. To the founder of our ministry, he and his wife—our founding pastor, he and his wife and their family, and to our pastor, he and his wife and their family, for the cost that they bore. I say it every time, but I'm never going to forget; I can't afford to forget that this wonderful Christian life isn't from my own blood, sweat, and tears. Somebody paved the way for us. Somebody, beginning at the Lord, Himself, Who hung on Golgotha's cross that we could be redeemed in Him. Somebody has paid the price, down through the ages. To all those who have come to stand in the gap, and make up the hedge, giving honor to every one of them, for their labor, and sacrifice, and dedication for the Lord. Amen.

We've taken August to be a month where we would talk about, from the Book of Colossians; we've got a study on that, the whole month, the whole month. And we pray that it is a blessing, and, it's been a blessing just going over it, because you learn so much. But, we pray that it can be a blessing to us all. Our scripture theme for the day, for the month—may it resonate in our hearts:

Colossians 1:10-12 *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

If we could bow our heads for just a moment. Almighty God, when we come before You, God, how can we not help but be humbled? God, we move in Your presence. You, Who stands high and looks low. You, who charge Your own angels with folly, and the stars themselves are not perfect in Your sight. What a magnificent God You are, to Whom—You are to whom we are to come to give glory and honor and magnificence... God we give all that is due unto You from ourselves, we give that to You. You, God, Who saw fit that You would love us, even at the times we are unlovable. And it just goes so far in our lives, God. We turn to You, and say, “Thank You, God. Thank You for all You've done for us. We're not even worthy, God; You allow us to breathe a message and a song of praise to say, ‘Thank You. Thank You, Lord, thank You, Lord.’” To You, Lord, do we come, and ask, as You've blessed us already, we ask that You would have a blessing on Your Word as we study and delve into it. May it bless our hearts, enrichen our lives, go forth to prepare our paths, and do that which You have committed it to do in our lives, and not return unto You void. And this we pray and claim in Jesus' name, and everyone said, amen. Amen.

Amen, Saints! So, our message today is from the Book of Colossians. Colossians—actually, today, we’re going to talk about the whole first chapter. But, our theme for the month is:

Colossians 1:10-12 *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father [We’re going to be talking about that, for a while, today: Giving thanks unto the Father], which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

If we could—we’ve talked, here at Christian Fellowship Great Lakes, we’ve talked, visited several of the letters to the church. We’ve talked about Galatians, we visited that, we talked about Ephesians, we’ve talked about Philippians, we’ve talked about—we’ve had a chance to visit different letters of the church. And, well, the setting is this: That the Lord saw our estate, came down to earth for us, both to redeem us from our sins, and for us to be reconciled to Him. And, there He was: He was born, He taught, He ministered, He bled, He died, and He rose with all power in His hands, and told His disciples to go in to all the world, and preach that Gospel, His Gospel, to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, He said, shall be saved, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

And, then, after that, you see the path of the disciples, how they came, throughout the Book of Acts it talks about them, but, the disciples, they came, and they took that Word even further as they went, beginning at Jerusalem, going into the world, as far as they could reach. And, then, you see in Acts chapter nine, arose one who was breathing out threatenings against the church. Saul, who was later called Paul, after he was converted, he, and those with him, and like him, and also others who were commissioned, went and took the Word even further. He and others would continue to take this gospel even further. And here we are, at Colosse, as the Bible, as the Word, as the message of the Lord Jesus Christ gets to them.

Now, it’s inherent for us to understand that every church has a characteristic. Every church has their issues, or their problems. It sometimes stems from their culture. Many times it stems from their people. Many times it stems from the people around them, the influences that come in. Whether it was idolatry—can you imagine what it was like in Rome? Idolatry was a huge issue, idolatry. They’ll fight it every day. Whether it was everything from offering to idols, or, fornication, as we read about in Corinthians. A problem. A problem, where it was something that was accepted, brought into the church, where it had to be chased out. Whether it was any of the many other things that we see in the Book of Galatians, or we see in Ephesians, or we see in Philippians. Many of the things that attack the church, or the issues of the church. And, here we are in Colossians, where, in Colossians, the real thing was they were new. They were a young church. And, so, as the message reaches Colosse, the church there, the believers there, Paul sends a message to them of encouragement. Starting at verse number one, if we could:

Colossians 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,*

Starting at verse number one, Paul, right off the bat—we have the privilege to be in 2016, and we have the written Word. We have Bibles, we can go to the store and buy one, if we lose one, or if it has pages torn out, and, if it’s too hard to read, we can go and try and find another version, something more appealing to us, and, nowadays, if you don’t like any of the versions that are out, you can make up your own Bible. “I learned this, and I think it was talking about this.” Well, anyway, that’s all I’m saying about that. That’s a message for another day. But that’s the day we’re living in. We’ve got cars, we’ve got trains and planes, we’ve got the printing press, and, more than the printing press, not so much a printing press, now we’ve got computers and printers. We don’t have to go to the newspaper place, most of us have our

own printer. A click of a button, and, boom, there it is. But, it wasn't that way, back here, in the early church. The early church, they had to take the message to them. And, so, as they were taking this message, Paul says, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God..." What an important statement this is: Paul says, "I am an apostle, but, this wasn't me doing this. This wasn't my idea." He didn't go into detail, but we know the detail. He was threatening, and persecuting, and locking Christians up. He was making sure that Christians, as much as he could do, weren't going to be talking about that Lord Jesus. That was Paul's will. But he said, "By the will of God, by the will of God I am what I am right now." Letting the Colossians know that God is going to tell you, have you, use you to do things that you don't want to do. And, then, if you are obedient to what God tells you to do, leads you to do, uses you to do, the majesty, the marvelousness, the glory of the things that will come about in your life, you can't even imagine. You can't even imagine because it will all be brought by God.

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother," letting everyone know, "I'm not the high and mighty thing up here. I got me some help. This is a unity thing. We are Christians together. And, so, if we could go on, we go on to verse number two:

Colossians 1:2 *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Letting everybody know, we're not going to get through every verse. If you're going, "Man, he's going verse by verse; that's a long message!" No, we're not going to go to every verse. But, we're going to go to a significant few of them. So, here, in verse number two, he says "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse..." letting them know, "If you're faithful, I know about you. It's an encouragement to me; I'm writing to you to encourage you." "To the faithful at Colosse, this message is to you," and, then, in the second-half of this, he says, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace and peace unto you. "I send you this communication, this letter, in grace and peace. I send grace and peace to you. I send grace and peace to you. This is my hand, saying, I wish it from God; I give it to you." This is our commission.

I had the opportunity to go to Haiti, some years ago. It was a marvelous trip. I went to Haiti, and when I got asked to go, I had it made up in my mind, "Hey, they asked me to go to Haiti. There must be something for me. I'm going to—okay, what am I going to do? I tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to go down there, and I'm going to support the pastors, I'm going to be really faithful in that, yeah. I got this thing done. I know what my reason for going is." And, as we got to Haiti,--I tell you, it was a beautiful land, beautiful people, beautiful trip, strong move of God—but, as we got to Haiti, there I was, with the pastors, Pastor Paine, and Pastor Thomas, and Pastor Hubert Ulysse, and the people of Haiti, the churches we went to, they saw what was in Pastor Paine's life; they saw what he brought, they saw him bringing love, and anointing, and everything, from the essence of him. And, they saw Pastor Thomas, they saw his anointing, they saw his love, and his care, and how he brought it to them. And then they looked over, and they saw Pastor Ulysse, and they saw, "He speaks our language, and here he is, smiling, and bringing that anointing and that power and that love." And then, you know what those people of Haiti did? they looked over to me, "What do you bring? We know the pastors are bringing something, but, you came, too. You are from the home church; what do you bring to give us?" Caught me off guard. Caught me off guard. But, thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, that he has grace and love and example in our life to be able to minister however capacity He gives the voice. But, the question, the question, is the same, whether we go to a wedding, or a funeral, the question is the same: What do you bring? And the question goes on, it's the same whether you're visiting in a hospital, whether you're in fellowship: What do you bring? Whether you minister to youth, or you're with your family: What do you bring? The question is the same.

And, if anybody ever listens to that voice of Satan that says, “You ain't go much of anything to bring. You don't have much of anything to bring. You...” First of all, that is a lie from the pit of hell. If God put it in you, it is in you. If you believe in Him, if you believe in His grace and His mercy, if you've been born again and received the Holy Spirit in your life, you have what God has put in your life. And that is what God asked you to give. Only what He has given you; only what He has given me; only what He has given us. If we could move on to verse number three; verse number three says:

Colossians 1:3 *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

Verse number three, it starts off giving thanks, and it moves on to praying always. This is akin, this is akin to the Lord's Prayer: “Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.” (Matthew 6:9) I give You thanks, I give You glory, I give You honor, Almighty God. And this is what he's passing on to the Colossians. Give thanks to God. Give worship to God. Let Him know that you're thankful. And the rest of it, praying always for you. “Forgive our debts, Lord, as we forgive our debtors.” And, Lord, if I got to make something better, God, help me make it better. I'm praying for this, and, when I pray, I learn, and I'll get better; I'll get better. Verse number four:

Colossians 1:4 *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,*

We give thanks when we hear about the blessings of God in your lives, in your homes, in your families, in your fellowships. And, the truth is, sometimes, I haven't given—I recognize this—I haven't given *due* thanks. I might do a drive-by thank You. I might mail one in. “Thank You, Lord, I just want to let You know, I got it covered. Thank You,” and move on, move on, when the blessing was enormous, I give Him a, “Uh, I got me a little bit of change, here.” I give him a quarter prayer for a million dollar blessing. “We give thanks when we heard about it. When we heard about your faith in Jesus Christ, we give thanks to God. When we heard about your love, one for another, we give thanks to God.

A little bit over a week ago, something happened. I was coming home from—I was coming home, on my way home, coming down Belvidere, my car cut off. Just cut off, going forty miles an hour. The speed limit is—thirty? I was going somewhere around thirty-five miles an hour, coming down Belvidere, and my car just cut off. I mean, the engine just stopped. So, here I am, coasting, in traffic, forty miles an hour—I mean, around thirty-five miles an hour. And, this is—let me show you—this is God. So, I didn't hit anything. It was hard to pump the brakes, because, you know, the power thing, and I was able to skirt through, uh, whisk one of the lights, into a parking lot, and I didn't get into any accidents or anything. But, my car was basically broke down. Well, as anybody would be, I was quite perturbed at this. Quite perturbed. “God, You know I got so much to do today, and, now, my car is down. It's on the blink. It's on the—what in the world? I don't know. I got to go to work tomorrow, I got—Aaaah!” But, let me tell you what God had planned. See, sometimes we don't even know things are of God. Let me tell you what God had planned. I was able to call a brother; that brother didn't complain, he came right out, took me home. Didn't complain. What a blessing that is. What a blessing that is. And then, somebody said—I said, “Oh, I got to get it into the shop.” And this is for a reason; I'm going to make this quick. “I've got to get it into the shop.” So, I call them, they're going to come out, they're going to tow it, it's going to take them two hours. That perturbed me even more. I'm quite perturbed now, but somebody said, “Oh, Brother Jose, he's got one of those gadgets that you can plug into your car and find out what's wrong with your car.” Oh, man, maybe I'll see that it won't cost me an arm and a leg. I called Brother Jose, said, “Meet me at my car.” So, he came over, and who else did he bring with him, but Brother Jim Bailey. He brought Jim Bailey with him, who knows about cars, but that wasn't the purpose for which they came. That's all I had on my mind, getting my car fixed, but that's not why they came. And, when they came, as

perturbed as I was, they brought such a joy in God, and in fellowship, that I couldn't stay mad. I couldn't stay mad—I wanted to stay mad—but, I couldn't stay mad, because they brought so much Jesus there. They brought Him, and we started fellowshiping and talking and plugging into the car, we can't figure out what's wrong, the tow people came, they took it, they put it in the shop, and all this time these brothers were talking about the goodness of God, the goodness of God. I couldn't stay mad, and they said, let's go get something to eat. It was kind of late to be going eating; I was kind of like, "Aaah. It's ten o'clock." "Yeah, but I'm hungry." "Yeah, okay." I didn't see the blessing that God had. You see, we got over there at the Full Moon restaurant, and it's as if God made time stand still, the fellowship was so sweet. Talking about how many things God's brought me through. How many things He's done for me. How good it is just to taste of His presence around us. All the services. When I lift my hands and, oh, the conversation kept going on. How can a Christian stay mad in a state like that? But that wasn't the end of the story! And then, in leaving, we got back into the car to leave, and it turned into a worship service. It turned into praying, and praising God, windows starting to fog up, but so much more so was us, in a car, giving praise to God, at eleven o'clock at night. Eleven o'clock at night, we should be sleeping. There's Brother Jose at work, driving up, and praising God. Jim Bailey, praying and praising God. I couldn't keep my mouth shut. That's why God had the car to quit, so that I could be in that fellowship. The way I was going, I wouldn't have been in that fellowship. But, God had a plan, you see, the Bible says all things work together for the Good when you love Him. When you love Him, it works for the good.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

And, just after that, I went to a little youth leaders meeting. Us, the youth leaders, we got together, we're trying to talk about what kind of blessing we were going to have—I'm keeping track of the time— what kind of blessing we're going to be able to seek for with the young people, because we really, earnestly want for God to move on our young. And, as we're there, one of the sisters shares a song that has blessed her. See, I didn't even know that God had a whole different blessing set up! Didn't even know it! And, as she played the song, God had His lightning bolt strike me right where I was. And, it was like heaven opened up and, there, love walked in. And I got a chance to feel and taste—I didn't know that God was going to move me, and make me weep like a little baby! I didn't know I was going to fall into His presence. But, God has a plan, when we love Him. When we love Him, God has a blessing on the way. And, if you're ever caught in the middle, in the desert and the devil says God ain't going to bless you now, if you love Him, if you love Him, and you're not at the good, right now, you have to know it's on its way! You have to know it's coming, because He promised it in His Word! If He promised it, it's coming. You tell the devil, "Shut up! I love Him, and, according to His Word, all things is working out for me! IT's working out for me, devil, so shut up! It's working out for me."

Colossians 1:5 *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;*

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven..." "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven..." This young church, this newer church, he is encouraging them in that hope in Heaven. He is encouraging them, because it is all about Heaven. Brother Malcolm, it's all about that place where the sun never sets. It's all about that place where the leaves never fade. It is all about those streets that are paved with gold. It's all about those gates that are made out of pearl. It's all about the presence of the Lord, where you're able to see that there's no division, no separation between you and Him. And where the angels said, "Come, and I will show you the Lamb's bride." It's all about those sins being washed away;

time is no more, and all our tears being wiped away. It's all about hearing, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Ye of Colosse, it's all about going to this hope in Heaven. Verse number six:

Colossians 1:6 *Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:*

So, verse three started the whole thing off. "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you," Why, why do we give thanks? Because we heard. What did we hear? In verse four, we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and we heard about your loving each other. We heard about the hope which is in Heaven, and, we heard, also, it's coming to you and to all the world.

Verse number seven:

Colossians 1:7 *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

"As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;" Now, it is thought that Paul wrote this letter from his second time in jail, and it is thought that Paul never established the Colossian church. That is, that is the thought, that someone else established it, and, one of the thoughts is that Epaphras established it. But the Bible doesn't go and dwell on who established it or who didn't; the Bible doesn't do that. Because, what the Bible does say is—it goes on to say that you are part of the body, you Colossians, you are part and one with Christ, that's what you are. And, it goes on to tell them that we pray for you, and include you. And we are familiar with this concept. Because, you see, we had a person who was stationed up here, and then he went down to Virginia, and then he went down to Florida, and then he went to Haiti. And he had something else burning in him—everybody else didn't understand it; some of us thought it was kind of weird, because we didn't see what God had there—but, what happened there was, as he went to Haiti, all of the sudden, churches were being established, and popping up, and believers were being made, and baptisms, and everything was being formed and fit; the whole scope of things was changing, because there was an Epaphras, if you will, who was going about to establish and do things, but he made sure that the connection was made with ministry. And, he may well not be the only Epaphras here today. For we have, and we have heard, one of our brothers who goes to Russia, and, every time he goes, he brings back a report of what happened: who he shared with, the challenges he faced. We had one of our brothers go to Guatemala, and he come back, and he told us the report, how it was there, who he shared with, who he talked with, what kind of events happened there. And we've had many of our congregation—we've had one, well, two—that went to the Philippines, and they brought back pictures of baptisms, and believers, and people whose hearts were changed. We have Epaphras's here today. And, who knows, among us, who will be the next Epaphras, as God sends us wherever he might send us? Maybe two: we've got those in Mexico, we've got those in Honduras. We've got those who go to North Carolina, South Carolina. Who knows? We've got those who go to Baltimore. Yeah, we're looking for a move of God. But, whoever we are, wherever we go, we've got to be ready. We've got to be ready for whoever.

Colossians 1:8-12 *Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

You know, Saints, some things—and we’ve talked about this—some things in the Gospel start with love, and some things in the Gospel start with thanks. And there is a relationship; they work together. Now, thanks is a thing that, something always precedes it. Something always precedes it. You don’t just say thanks out of the clear blue sky. And, some of us have it so ingrained in us to say thank you, I remember *somebody*, when they got a ticket (clears throat), because, maybe they were doing a little excess, once they received it from the officer, said, (clearing throat again) “Thank you,” because it’s part of the culture. But, thanks comes after you have received something. But, there is a reciprocal for thanks; thanks also precedes something else. So, when something is given, you give thanks, and, when you give thanks, something also comes. “Your welcome?” Yeah, in some cultures, that’s one of the things that we say. But, another thing that comes when we give thanks is foundation laying, foundation laying. Thanks lays a foundation, for something else to be built upon. Whether it’s more of a relationship, whether it’s bridging a gap, saying thank you, having an attitude of gratitude, lays a foundation.

Ezra 3:11 *And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.*

The foundation of the house of the LORD was laid when they started praising and giving thanks. You say thanks to somebody when they give you something, or, let’s do it this way: You **don’t** say thanks to somebody when they give you something, they remember that, they remember that, and they’re less inclined to do it, a second time. It’s a lot harder the second time. But, when you say thanks, and have that attitude of gratitude, there, they’re more inclined to do it again, or, to do more, because you have laid a foundation for other things to be built upon. Thanks precedes foundation-laying, foundation-laying. And, yes, we’re supposed to thank God for everything in our life. We’re supposed to thank God for everything in our life. If you have a job, you need to say thank You for it. If you have a business, you need to say thank You, Lord. If you don’t have a job or a business, but you had food to eat, you need to say thank You for it. If you were able to get out of bed this morning, or hadn’t been to bed, you need to say thank You. If you were able to put your feet on the floor, walk across it, and had shoes to put on, you need to say thank You, thank You, Lord. In everything we’re supposed to give thanks. “Everything? Everything?” Yes! “Why? Why are we supposed to give thanks in everything?”

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: [Why?] for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. This is what God wants from us, to give thanks. He wants it. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning every single one of us, giving of thanks. We’re about to wrap up, here.

Colossians 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church...*

So, Colossians, the Lord Jesus Christ is your Head. He is—you are the church, He is your Head.

Colossians 1:18-19 *...who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*

And, if He is the Head, and He is all fullness—He is the Head, that the fullness might also be coming to us from His hand.

Amen. Give the Lord a praise.